

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

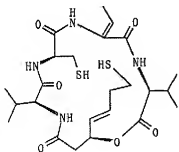
**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

**1.-10. (canceled).**

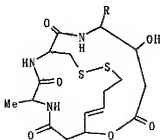
**11. (previously amended):** A method for inhibiting articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.

**12. (canceled).**

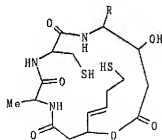
**13. (previously presented):** The method according to claim 11, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is selected from FK228, MS-27-275, Trichostatin A, NVP-LAQ824, SAHA, Apicidin, Phenylbutyrate, Valproic acid, Pivaloyloxymethyl butyrate, CI-994, Depudecin, Trapoxin, a CHAP, butyric acid, a depsipeptide compound represented by the following formula (I), a depsipeptide compound represented by the following general formula (II), and a depsipeptide compound represented by the following general formula (IIa):



(I)



(II)



(IIa)

wherein R represents an isopropyl group, a sec-butyl group, or an isobutyl group.

**14. (previously presented):** The method according to claim 13, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is selected from FK228, the depsipeptide compound represented by the formula (I), the depsipeptide compound represented by the general formula (II), the depsipeptide compound represented by the general formula (IIa), MS-27-275, Trichostatin A, NVP-LAQ824, SAHA, Apicidin, Phenylbutyrate, and Valproic acid.

**15. (previously presented):** The method according to claim 11, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is a compound whose histone deacetylase inhibitory activity ( $IC_{50}$  value) is a concentration of 100  $\mu$ M or less when measured by a histone deacetylase inhibition assay comprising:

- (a) pre-incubating the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound with [ $^3$ H] acetyl-histones in a solution containing PTT for 1 hour at room temperature,
- (b) adding histone deacetylase to the solution of step (a) and incubating at room temperature for 2 hours, and
- (c) measuring the released [ $^3$ H].

**16. (currently amended):** A method for treating articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation in arthroseitis, rheumatic arthritis, or osteoarthritis, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.

**17. (currently amended):** A method for treating arthroseitis, caused by articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.

**18. (new):** A method for treating osteoarthritis, caused by articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.